UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.6/1995/13
13 March 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
Thirty-ninth session
New York, 15 March-4 April 1995
Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Steps to be taken by the Division for the Advancement of Women to ensure that relevant human rights mechanisms of the United Nations regularly address violations of the rights of women, including progress in preparing a joint work plan on women's human rights for the Centre for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In resolution 38/2, the Commission requested the Secretary General to see to the preparation of a joint work plan on women's human rights for the Centre for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women. Subsequently, the General Assembly, in resolution 49/161, requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on steps to be taken by the Division for the Advancement of Women, in cooperation with other United Nations bodies, specifically the Centre for Human Rights to ensure that relevant human rights mechanisms of the United Nations regularly addressed violations of the rights of women. The present report describes measures taken by both the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Centre for Human Rights, discusses possible additional steps and concludes with a proposed joint work plan for 1995.

* E/CN.6/1995/1.

95-06036 (E) 160395 200395

CONTENTS

	Paragraphs	Page
INTRODUCTION	1 - 3	3
I. POSSIBLE MEASURES TO HELP ENSURE THAT VIOLATIONS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN ARE REGULARLY ADDRESSED BY RELEVANT HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS	4 - 29	3
A. Support for the work of mechanisms dealing with women's human rights as a primary concern	7 - 15	4
B. Support for mechanisms dealing with human rights generally	16 - 29	6
II. INTEGRATION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN INTO EXISTING HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS AND PROCEDURES	30 - 62	9
A. Activities of United Nations human rights treaty bodies	32 - 42	9
B. Consideration of the human rights of women by the Commission on Human Rights	43 - 51	12
C. Activities of the Centre for Human Rights relating to integration of the equal status and human rights of women into the mainstream of United Nations system-wide activities	52 - 62	13
III. JOINT WORK PLAN OF THE DIVISION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN AND THE CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS FOR 1995	63 - 66	16

INTRODUCTION

1. In resolution 38/2, the Commission on the Status of Women requested the Secretary-General to see to the preparation of a joint work plan on women's human rights for the Centre for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women on an annual basis and to inform both the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women at their annual sessions, beginning in 1995, of those plans; the Commission also requested the Secretary-General to promote the mutual availability of documentation, as well as the development of a public information strategy. 1/

2. The General Assembly, in resolution 49/161, requested the Commission on the Status of Women to continue to examine the implications of the World Conference on Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action 2/ adopted by the Conference for its central role in matters related to the rights of women within the United Nations system and to report to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1995. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report for the Commission, for consideration at its thirty-ninth session, on steps to be taken by the Division for the Advancement of Women, in cooperation with other United Nations bodies, specifically the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat, to ensure that the relevant human rights mechanisms of the United Nations, such as treaty-monitoring bodies, rapporteurs and working groups, regularly addressed violations of the rights of women, including gender-specific abuses.

3. The present report first describes some of the measures considered by the Division for the Advancement of Women in order to carry out its mandate from the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. It then provides information, prepared by the Centre for Human Rights, on ways in which women's human rights are being integrated into the human rights regime. Finally, it describes the main joint activities of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Centre for Human Rights for 1995.

I. POSSIBLE MEASURES TO HELP ENSURE THAT VIOLATIONS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN ARE REGULARLY ADDRESSED BY RELEVANT HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

4. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action reiterated that the human rights of women are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. They specifically highlighted human rights violations, such as violence against women, that are particular to women or gender-specific, and made clear that women's human rights are subject to violations in all spheres. Women are denied the enjoyment of their political and civil rights generally and on an equal basis with men; they also suffer violations of their economic, social and cultural rights. The obstacles women face that are particular to their sex must be made visible and recognized. Both de jure and de facto discrimination and violations of rights must be examined.

5. A number of recent events and actions taken in intergovernmental bodies now provide a solid basis for systematic cooperation between the Division for the

Advancement of Women and the Centre for Human Rights. These events and actions include, in particular, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights; Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1993/46 on integrating the rights of women into the human rights mechanisms of the United Nations 3/ and 1994/45 on the question of integrating the rights of women into the human rights mechanisms of the United Nations and the elimination of violence against women; 4/ Commission on the Status of Women resolutions 37/4 on the World Conference on Human Rights 5/ and 38/2 on mainstreaming women's human rights; 1/ Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/20 on the advancement of women and human rights and General Assembly resolutions 48/104 on the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and 49/161 on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, paragraphs 21 and 22.

6. The means of bringing women's human rights into the mainstream of the work of human rights mechanisms are similar to those in any area where matters of concern to women are being integrated, in that there must be special sensitivity to gender-related concerns and there must be access to the maximum amount of gender-related information. The measures proposed below are based on the premise, in particular, that the Division for the Advancement of Women can be of special assistance in this respect by providing appropriate inputs on women's human rights to the work of the human rights mechanisms.

A. Support for the work of mechanisms dealing with women's human rights as a primary concern

7. At present, three mechanisms deal with women's human rights as their primary concern: the Commission on the Status of Women, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women.

8. The Commission on the Status of Women, the main intergovernmental policy-making body concerned with the advancement of women has, since its inception, and in accordance with its mandate, dealt with the rights of women. Much of its work has focused on establishing the necessary international legal and policy framework for ensuring women's full and equal enjoyment of their rights in the political, economic, civil, social and educational fields. It is anticipated that the Commission, in accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, General Assembly resolution 49/161, and the Platform for Action (to be adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women), one of whose critical areas of concern is the lack of awareness of and commitment to internationally and nationally recognized women's human rights, will continue to exercise its policy-making function with regard to the rights of women. Furthermore, the Commission is expected to assume the lead role in monitoring the implementation of the Platform for Action and to assist the general human rights regime in addressing the gender dimensions of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

9. In order to fully assume its role in matters related to the rights of women, the Commission will have to be apprised regularly of the approach, methodology and efforts of the human rights mechanisms with regard to the rights

of women and violations of the human rights of women, including gender-specific abuses. In reporting on the issue to the Economic and Social Council, as requested by the General Assembly in resolution 49/161, the Commission will help strengthen the Council's policy coordination function and ensure that a consistent approach to the subject of women's human rights is applied throughout the United Nations intergovernmental machinery. This monitoring function of the Commission should be based on an annual analytical report reviewing developments in the general human rights regime from a gender perspective, prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women in cooperation with the Centre for Human Rights. The report could also be submitted to the Commission on Human Rights for information.

10. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women is the mechanism established to monitor implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. 6/ Its work in reviewing States parties' reports and in preparing general recommendations, and its contributions to international conferences and other events is essential to ensuring the enjoyment by women of their human rights. The Committee has been serviced by the Division for the Advancement of Women since it was established. This has included the preparation of background analyses, for Committee members, of each State party report to be considered at a given session, as well as analyses of articles of the Convention on which the Committee is preparing a general recommendation. The analyses draw on the Division's work on policy issues related to the advancement of women, as well as reports of States parties. Regardless of any decision relating to the servicing of the Committee in the future, it will continue to be important for the Division for the Advancement of Women to provide information and other inputs of this type with a view to facilitating the work of the Committee.

11. In resolution 1994/49, the Commission on Human Rights decided to appoint a Special Rapporteur on violence against women. 4/ In the same resolution, the Commission invited the Special Rapporteur to carry out his mandate within the framework of, inter alia, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. 7/ It also invited the Special Rapporteur to cooperate and consult with the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The appointment of the Special Rapporteur builds on the work of the Commission and the Committee, both of which have long been concerned with the problem of violence against women and have developed, respectively, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, and general recommendations 12 8/ and 19 9/ on violence against women.

12. The Division, as secretariat of both the Commission and the Committee, has undertaken extensive information collection and policy research on the issue of violence against women in general, as well as on such aspects as violence against migrant women workers and refugee women and domestic violence. Information collection has been facilitated by the Committee's general recommendations 12 and 19, whereby States parties' reports are expected to contain specific information on actions to deal with violence against women.

13. In 1994 and early in 1995, discussions took place between the Special Rapporteur and staff of the Division concerning support to be provided by the

Division to the Rapporteur in the preparation of her reports. It was agreed to establish in the Division a procedure for the automatic and regular exchange of information between the Division and the Special Rapporteur.

14. In order to support the work of the Special Rapporteur, the Division will issue in September each year a compilation of the material it receives or prepares on violence against women. The compilation will include relevant excerpts from States parties' reports submitted in accordance with article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; information contained in national reports submitted to the Secretariat in preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women; information to be submitted in the future in connection with monitoring the implementation of the Platform for Action to be adopted at the Conference, which contains a critical area of concern on violence against women; reports to be prepared in the future by the Division in accordance with intergovernmental mandates; and materials collected and prepared in the framework of United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice efforts. The computerized database of available and future material that the Division is in the process of developing will facilitate the preparation of the report. The database is expected to become operational in 1995.

15. The Division will also explore the possibility, in cooperation with a non-governmental organization, of preparing regularly an annotated bibliography on violence against women, which would include data already collected by the Division, as well as academic, research and non-governmental materials collected on a global basis.

B. Support for mechanisms dealing with human rights generally

16. Relevant mechanisms within the wider human rights regime whose work would be facilitated by input from the Division for the Advancement of Women include human rights treaty bodies, the Commission on Human Rights and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

1. Human rights treaty bodies

17. Support for the five human rights treaty bodies other than the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women would involve the provision of information or other inputs regarding gender-related aspects of their work.

18. A first step in this direction could be the preparation of an analysis indicating those articles of conventions that are particularly relevant to women's human rights, with a view to identifying and analysing their potentially different impact on men and women in the enjoyment of human rights.

19. In order to assist the treaty bodies in carrying out their stated intention to strengthen the monitoring of the human rights of women, it is proposed to prepare a report for the forthcoming meeting of the persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies containing an analysis, from a gender perspective, of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 10/ the

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 10/ the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 11/ the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 12/ and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. 13/ The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women would serve as the normative framework for this analysis.

20. A second step could be to provide as part of the pre-session documentation for all human rights treaty bodies, inputs on gender issues along the lines of those currently provided for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which contain information on the situation of women relative to men in the States concerned.

21. It is proposed to provide inputs to the Centre for Human Rights on a pilot basis for inclusion in the documentation to be prepared for both the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights for consideration at a session in 1995. Depending on the opinion expressed by those bodies regarding the utility of the analyses, similar data could be provided to the Centre for submission to other treaty bodies.

22. A further step would be to provide background analyses on gender issues to assist treaty bodies in preparing their general comments, recommendations and suggestions to serve as an input into the discussion of experts once an article or topic has been chosen for preparation of a general comment. For example, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recently adopted a general comment on the rights of the ageing, an issue which has a clear gender dimension. Similarly, the Human Rights Committee has decided to address itself again to article 3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all the rights set forth in the Covenant) and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has adopted a general recommendation on articles 9, 15 and 16 of the Convention and is preparing recommendations on articles 2, 7 and 8.

2. Commission on Human Rights

23. In recent years, the Commission on Human Rights has emphasized the need to integrate the human rights of women into the mainstream of the United Nations human rights regime, while the appointment of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and its consequences, has identified violence against women as an issue of human rights. In view of its responsibility for implementing the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the Commission on Human Rights may request an annual overview report on women's human rights as they are dealt with and addressed outside the United Nations human rights system. The report could also be made available to the Commission on the Status of Women.

24. With regard to thematic and country-specific rapporteurs, working groups of the Commission and the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, information could be provided by the Division to those dealing with the equal status and human rights of women. Such information could

consist of specific analyses intended to serve as a contribution to the work of the human rights mechanisms.

3. United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

25. In accordance with the mandate given to him by the General Assembly in resolution 48/141, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has the responsibility of protecting the effective enjoyment by all of all civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. In his activities, the High Commissioner has given special importance to promoting the equal status of women and respect for the human rights of women. The High Commissioner attaches particular importance to these issues when visiting countries, and systematically raises them with government officials and non-governmental organizations, appealing for the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. He draws special attention to the impact on the rights of women of economic adjustment or transitional policies. The High Commissioner is also making a direct contribution to the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women. One objective of the Conference is to encourage universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and of all human rights treaties. The basic human rights treaties such as the International Covenants on Human Rights not only contain anti-discrimination provisions, but also identify areas of specific gender discrimination that require that States parties enact legal and administrative measures, including affirmative action, to achieve equality between men and women. The ratification and implementation of all human rights treaties would thus directly assist in promoting respect for women's rights.

26. Another area of specific concern to the High Commissioner with regard to women's rights is development, since there can be no genuine development without the equal and meaningful participation of women in the development process. Thus, discrimination against women in access to health care, education, employment, property and land rights, inter alia, constitutes an obstacle to the realization of the right to development. In addition, within his mandate to coordinate human rights education and information activities and especially in connection with the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, the High Commissioner stresses the need to ensure women's equal access to education and that education should be free from gender stereotypes. Educational opportunities offered to the girl child and women must be significantly increased as part of the broad range of activities needed to combat discrimination.

27. In the area of technical cooperation, the High Commissioner has also stressed the need to take into account the situation and rights of women in the country concerned, to include those aspects in the projects developed and to prepare programmes and projects specifically designed to address the dimensions of women's equality and rights.

28. In accordance with the objective set by the World Conference on Human Rights, the High Commissioner gives close attention to integrating the equal status of women and the human rights of women into the mainstream of United

Nations activities system-wide. In particular, he is studying ways to increase cooperation and promote further integration of objectives and goals between the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Human Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations bodies. This also includes strengthening cooperation and coordination between the Centre for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women.

29. Finally, in the context of his mandate to rationalize, adapt, strengthen and streamline the United Nations machinery in the field of human rights with a view to improving its efficiency and effectiveness, the High Commissioner will seek ways of reinforcing the organs dealing specifically with the equal status and rights of women on the one hand and, on the other, of strengthening and deepening the consideration given by other human rights bodies and their mechanisms to gender-specific issues, non-discrimination and the equal enjoyment by women of human rights.

II. INTEGRATION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN INTO EXISTING HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS AND PROCEDURES

30. The World Conference on Human Rights urged the full and equal enjoyment by women of all human rights, as a priority objective for both Governments and the United Nations, and that the equal status and human rights of women should be integrated into the mainstream of United Nations system-wide activities. It also stressed the need to strengthen cooperation and coordination between United Nations bodies and mechanisms, in particular between the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Human Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and other relevant bodies, as well as between the Centre for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women. A number of steps have been taken to achieve that end.

31. Within his mandate to promote and protect the effective enjoyment by women of all civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights attaches special importance to the promotion of the equal status and human rights of women. He has given priority to activities related to the integration of women's human rights into the mainstream of the programme of work of the Centre for Human Rights. When visiting countries, the High Commissioner systematically holds discussions about the status and human rights of women with government officials and non-governmental organizations, drawing attention in particular to the adverse impact on the rights of women of economic structural adjustment.

A. Activities of United Nations human rights treaty bodies

32. In compliance with the provision of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the fifth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies, held in September 1994, adopted a number of recommendations relevant to women's human rights. 14/ It should be noted that discussion of this issue has never

been so extensive. The chairpersons stressed that all human rights contained in the international instruments applied fully to women, and that the equal enjoyment of those rights should be closely monitored by each treaty body within the competence of its mandate and that a common strategy should be developed by the treaty bodies in that regard. As reports submitted by States parties often did not contain adequate information on the actual enjoyment by women of their human rights and such information had not been forthcoming from other sources, they recommended that each treaty body consider amending, where appropriate, its guidelines for the preparation of States parties' reports to request information, including disaggregated statistical data, from States parties on the situation of women under the terms of each instrument.

33. The chairpersons decided to devote their 1995 meeting to ways of monitoring the human rights of women more effectively. In preparation for that meeting, the chairpersons invited each treaty body to consider, within the competence of its mandate, how the monitoring of the human rights of women might be enhanced.

34. With regard to specific action, a number of steps have been taken by the human rights treaty bodies to address all forms of discrimination that women suffer in violation of the provisions of international human rights treaties. Examples are provided below.

35. The Human Rights Committee attaches great importance to the monitoring of States parties' compliance with the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and, in general, to the promotion of the rights of women. The lists of issues prepared in conjunction with the consideration of States parties' reports always contain questions concerning the participation of women in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the country, and the proportion of males and females in schools and universities. Similarly, in the concluding observations, States are frequently urged to adopt further measures to improve respect for the rights of women under the Covenant.

36. On 14 October 1994, the pre-sessional working group of the Human Rights Committee took note of the various recommendations made by the World Conference on Human Rights with regard to the integration of the equal status and human rights of women into the work of the human rights treaty bodies and recommended (a) that a general comment be adopted on the status and human rights of women under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; (b) that lists of issues include concrete questions on the equal status and human rights of women; and (c) that the guidelines of the Committee be examined, with a view to requesting States parties to provide gender-specific information in their reports. The Human Rights Committee considered the recommendations at its fifty-second session and agreed to discuss them further at its fifty-third session, in March 1995.

37. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights pays particular attention to the measures taken by States parties to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights. In its examination of States parties' reports, the Committee takes into account information provided by States in their reports under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, as well as the

deliberations and findings of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

38. In 1990, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights revised its reporting guidelines, inter alia, to bring them into line with article 3 of the Covenant and with its own practice. In its revised guidelines and written lists of issues, submitted to States parties prior to the consideration of reports, the Committee always requests gender-specific data from States parties. In its written lists of issues, the Committee requests information about equality of remuneration, problems women are facing on the labour market, measures taken to protect women migrant workers, women's rights to inheritance and gender-disaggregated statistical data on the number of persons affected by HIV/AIDS.

39. The Committee has decided to prepare a statement for the Fourth World Conference on Women, in which it will stress the importance of the implementation of the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in promoting and ensuring the equal status and human rights of women.

40. A number of activities carried out by the Committee on the Rights of the Child have a direct bearing on the rights of women. For example, the Committee, when examining reports submitted by States parties on the implementation of the Convention, stresses the need to ensure equality on the basis of sex in all matters related to the child, and to protect and promote effectively the human rights of the girl child. Problems such as discrimination against girl children, their exploitative use in child labour, early marriage, harmful traditional health practices and denial of educational opportunities, and the need for concerted efforts to deal with them, are frequently referred to in the Committee's discussions.

41. In recommendations 4, adopted at its fourth session and 3, adopted at its fifth session, the Committee decided to be actively involved in, and contribute to, the preparatory process for the Fourth World Conference on Women. 15/ As a contribution to the Conference, the Committee held a one-day general discussion on the girl child during its eighth session, in January 1995. At the end of the discussion, the Committee prepared a set of conclusions and suggestions reflecting the main areas addressed, for inclusion in its report. The Committee also adopted a recommendation by which it decided to transmit the content of the general discussion on the girl child to the secretariat of the Fourth World Conference on Women, with a view to ensuring that particular emphasis was given to the priority measures discussed. The recommendation has been transmitted separately to the Commission on the Status of Women.

42. There has also been noticeable progress with regard to the gender composition of the treaty bodies. One of the 10 members of the Committee Against Torture is a woman. As at 31 December 1994, 6 of the 18 members of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights were women. All 23 members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women are women. Of the 18 members of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, only one is a woman. The Committee on the Rights of the Child consists of 10 experts, 6 of whom are women. As of January 1995, the Human Rights Committee has 18 members, 4 of whom are women.

B. Consideration of the human rights of women by the Commission on Human Rights

43. The Commission on Human Rights, in resolution 1994/45 on the question of integrating the rights of women into the human rights mechanisms of the United Nations and the elimination of violence against women, decided to appoint, for a three-year period, a Special Rapporteur on violence against women, including its causes and its consequences. 4/ A preliminary report prepared by the Special Rapporteur (E/CN.4/1995/42) is under consideration by the Commission at its fifty-first session (Geneva, 30 January-10 March 1995).

44. In a number of resolutions, the Commission has also drawn attention to the situation of women, as well as to practices of discrimination against women - for example, resolutions 1994/18 on the implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, 1994/51 on the proclamation of a decade for human rights education, 1994/49 on the protection of human rights in the context of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and 1994/34 on human rights in the administration of justice. 4/ In decision 1994/104, the Commission decided to endorse the recommendation of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities concerning harmful traditional practices affecting the health of women and children. 16/ At its fifty-first session, the Commission is to consider the recommendation of the Subcommission concerning the extension of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on traditional practices.

45. In resolution 1994/53 on human rights and thematic procedures, the Commission, having noted that some human rights violations were specific to or primarily directed against women, and that the identification and reporting of those violations demanded specific awareness and sensitivity, called on thematic special rapporteurs and working groups to include in their reports gender-disaggregated data and to address the characteristics and practice of human rights violations that were specifically or primarily directed against women or to which women were particularly vulnerable. 4/ Moreover, the Commission has encouraged the representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons, the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions to pay special attention to the situation of women.

46. In compliance with the Commission's requests, several thematic and country special rapporteurs have devoted particular attention to the status and human rights of women. They have stressed the importance of eliminating the discrimination that women are still facing in the educational, occupational, social and political spheres. Some of them reported that the lack of educational opportunities for girls compared with boys, which has resulted in the high rate of illiteracy among women, is an obstacle to women's participation in productive activities, in the public sector and in the decision-making process. Violence against women was a subject of grave concern to some rapporteurs, who referred to numerous cases of rape and child prostitution in certain regions of the world. Discrimination in the enjoyment of the right to freedom of movement, the right to health and the right to inheritance, as well

as such marriage-related customs as bride-price and their consequences for the girl child, have also been reported by certain rapporteurs.

47. The importance of women's participation in the development process has been emphasized by the Working Group on the Right to Development. The Working Group discusses this issue regularly and indicates that the continuing discrimination against women, which prevents their full participation in economic, political, social and cultural life, constitutes a major obstacle to the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development.

48. The Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery discusses sexual exploitation of women, especially during wartime, and the importance of compensation for the victims. It also raises issues such as discrimination of women in the family and early marriage. It recommended that treaty bodies pay particular attention to respect for the provisions of international instruments concerning the prohibition of slavery and the slave-trade, the elimination of traffic in women, suppression of exploitation of women, equality in marriage, protection against economic exploitation, and sexual abuse.

49. In August 1994, the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities decided to consider the human rights of women and the girl child under every relevant item of its agenda and in all relevant studies. It requested that in all the reports they submit, States provide a gender perspective in their analyses and recommendations.

50. Articles 22 and 43 of the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, adopted by the Subcommission, refers to the special situation of indigenous women. These provisions require that attention be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous women when determining appropriate measures to improve the economic and social condition of indigenous peoples, and to ensure respect or equality between indigenous men and women.

51. The Subcommission continues to examine the problem of harmful traditional practices affecting the health of women and children. It adopted a plan of action for the elimination of those practices and recommended the extension of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for two more years in order to enable her to undertake an in-depth study to assess, inter alia, the differences and similarities between traditional practices affecting the health of women and children in many parts of the world.

C. Activities of the Centre for Human Rights relating to integration of the equal status and human rights of women into the mainstream of United Nations system-wide activities

52. The plan of activities prepared by the Centre for Human Rights for the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action provided for the establishment of a focal point in charge of executing activities relating to the equal status and human rights of women. Since February 1994, a staff member has been serving as the provisional focal point on human rights of women in the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights in order to

coordinate action within the Centre on women's issues and liaise within the United Nations system, particularly in cooperation and coordination with the Division for the Advancement of Women and other United Nations bodies related to women, especially in view of the Fourth World Conference on Women and its follow-up. The Focal Point ensures that various human rights mechanisms, as well as the staff of the Centre, address in their work the human rights of women and systematically integrate a gender dimension in their working methods. The focal point represents the Centre at relevant meetings organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women and participates in the annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, as well as the inter-agency meetings on women and the major non-governmental organization forums on women. Among other tasks, the Focal Point also has to coordinate activities relevant to the human rights of women, with United Nations bodies, in particular the Division for the Advancement of Women, and with non-governmental organizations related to women, especially with a view to elaborating a system-wide plan of action to implement the recommendations of the World Conference on Human Rights with regard to the equal status of women and men, as well as the recommendations of the Fourth World Conference on Women relating to the human rights of women.

53. The Centre for Human Rights has contributed to relevant documentation in preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women. Also as a contribution to the Conference, the Centre has issued a fact sheet on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the work of the Committee on the Convention and a fact sheet on United Nations activities for the elimination of harmful traditional practices affecting the health of women and the girl child.

54. In cooperation with the Division for the Advancement of Women, the Centre and the United Nations Development Fund for Women will organize an expert group meeting on the drafting of specific gender-sensitive guidelines for the integration of the status and human rights of women into United Nations human rights activities and programmes of work. The meeting will bring together experts from treaty bodies and practitioners in women's human rights from both human rights and women's rights organizations to examine and address problems faced and obstacles to be overcome in the mainstreaming of women's human rights into the United Nations human rights mechanisms. The expert group will attempt to develop specific gender-sensitive guidelines on how to identify, document and report gender-based human rights violations, with a view to building the capacity to analyse all relevant information and make it available.

55. The Centre, in compliance with Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1993/46 3/ and 1994/54, 4/ through a consultation process, seeks to ensure that all United Nations human rights bodies and mechanisms, including the treaty bodies, are fully apprised of the particular ways in which the rights of women are violated and that they use gender-disaggregated data in their work. In this regard, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights addressed letters to all the special rapporteurs, representatives of the Secretary-General for human rights and the chairpersons of treaty bodies regarding the need to implement the provisions of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights. He stressed the importance of examining systematically the violations of human rights suffered by women and, in particular, of seeking and including information on de jure and de facto

discrimination against women. Recalling the existence of a generally accepted international obligation to eliminate discrimination and violation of women's rights, as provided for in international human rights law, he stressed the need to examine systematically the structural causes of women's inequality in society and to reinforce international human rights law in order to attain the formal requirement of equal treatment of men and women.

56. Since the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the Centre for Human Rights has increased its effectiveness in addressing, throughout its programmes of work, the promotion and protection of human rights from a gender perspective - in training courses, teaching and training manuals, seminars, project design, evaluation and many other areas, such as building up regional human rights institutions and the provision of technical assistance for the protection of human rights.

57. Further efforts will be made to provide Governments, at their request, with advisory services and technical assistance in order to, for instance, build up or strengthen national institutions, strengthen the administration of justice, develop national laws, in keeping with international standards, strengthen ratification and implementation of human rights instruments and incorporate the human rights component in an integrated approach to development strategies.

58. Persons conducting needs assessment missions for technical assistance are instructed to take particular account of the situation of women in the target country and to incorporate measures designed to improve the human rights situation of women in all recommendations for assistance. All training courses and seminars in the administration of justice now contain a practical component that focuses specifically on the human rights of women. In an effort to ensure the equal participation of professional groups in the training courses, the Centre has recently taken the initiative of including specific requirements to this effect in legal agreements concluded between the United Nations and the host country. Under this clause, the host Government is required to ensure that the authorities responsible for selecting participants make every effort to guarantee the participation of women.

59. Expertise has been developed within the Centre for the organization and delivery of briefings on the human rights of women to students, delegations, non-governmental organizations and other groups visiting the United Nations Office at Geneva. The human rights of women are specifically incorporated in all relevant publications and in the Professional Training Series.

60. The Centre for Human Rights will develop training materials, in particular a manual for the training of international civil servants in human rights, including gender sensitivity. Other educational and training materials will be developed to organize specific training activities focusing on peace-keeping, peacemaking, humanitarian and relief operations. Training will also be provided for United Nations human rights and humanitarian relief personnel to assist them in recognizing and dealing with human rights abuses particular to women and to enable them to carry out their work without gender bias.

61. For the purpose of implementing the above-mentioned activities in the most effective way, staff of the Centre have established and strengthened contacts

with relevant United Nations bodies, in particular, the Division for the Advancement of Women, and non-governmental organizations involved in the human rights of women.

62. With regard to the recruitment of consultants and trainers, the Centre has strived to utilize the services of qualified women as much as possible. A roster of experts in the field of women's rights for use in technical and assistance projects is currently being developed.

III. JOINT WORK PLAN OF THE DIVISION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN AND THE CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS FOR 1995

63. Most of the activities described above are, by their nature, mutually reinforcing and do not require a special effort of joint planning, once agreed upon. A number of activities, however, can build on the respective competences of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Centre for Human Rights and, when jointly planned, can lead to particularly positive results. Because of the physical distance between the two units, resource constraints, and their heavy workloads, the jointly planned activities have been kept limited in number and have focused on high priority areas. The initial work plan covers only 1995. Following the Fourth World Conference on Women, a longer term work plan will be elaborated as part of the implementation of both the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and the Platform for Action of the Conference.

64. The first joint activity is in the area of training. The Centre for Human Rights organizes training courses on reporting and other matters for States parties to human rights treaties. The Division for the Advancement of Women will provide staff to the Centre to assist in gender aspects of reporting for at least one course in 1995. For several years, the Division has been organizing subregional seminars on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, some on reporting and others for States considering becoming parties to the Convention. One such seminar will be organized jointly by the two bodies, with the participation of staff from both, late in 1995.

65. Second, the Centre for Human Rights organizes advisory services missions to requesting countries. When these missions include a focus on gender, the Division for the Advancement of Women will be involved in selecting experts and, where feasible, may participate itself.

66. Third, the Division for the Advancement of Women will work with the Centre for Human Rights to develop material on women's human rights for inclusion in activities related to the Decade for Human Rights Education.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1994, Supplement No. 7 (E/1994/27), chap. I, sect. C.

2/ Report of the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 14-25 June 1993 (A/CONF.157/24 (Part I)), chap. III.

3/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1993, Supplement No. 3 and corrigenda (E/1993/23 and Corr.2 and 4), chap. II, sect. A.

4/ Ibid., 1994, Supplement No. 4 and corrigendum (E/1994/24 and Corr.1) chap. II, sect. A.

5/ Ibid., 1993, Supplement No. 7 (E/1993/27) chap. I, sect. C.

6/ General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

7/ General Assembly resolution 48/104.

8/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/44/38), chap. V.

9/ Ibid., Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/47/38), chap. I.

10/ General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

11/ General Assembly resolution 2106 A (XX), annex.

12/ General Assembly resolution 39/46, annex.

13/ General Assembly resolution 44/25, annex.

14/ See the report of the fifth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies (A/49/537), annex.

15/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 41 (A/49/41), chap. I, sect. G.

16/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1994, Supplement No. 4 and corrigendum (E/1994/24 and Corr.1), chap. II, sect. B.